United Nations A/C.1/49/PV.2

General Assembly
Forty-ninth session
Official Records

First Committee

2nd Meeting
Thursday, 13 October 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Valencia-Rodríguez . . . . . (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Permit me at the outset to extend a warm and sincere welcome to all of you who are participating in the meetings of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to all States Members of the United Nations for the privilege and honour that they have bestowed upon me and my country by electing me as Chairman of this body.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Gerhard Walter Henze of Germany for graciously nominating me as a candidate for the chairmanship of the First Committee for the current session. I wish, through him, to convey to Ambassador Adolf von Wagner the appreciation of the First Committee, which benefited immensely from his wisdom and diplomatic skill when he presided over the deliberations of the Committee last year. He made an important contribution to the results achieved by the Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

I am fully aware of the fact that I am following in the tradition of chairmen who presided very skilfully over the deliberations and work of the Committee in the last several years. I intend, with the help, guidance and indulgence of the Committee, to discharge the high responsibilities of my post with determination, devotion and impartiality in order to ensure that the Committee's work is conducted in an orderly manner and that our endeavours will result in a successful conclusion. In doing so, I count on the constructive cooperation and assistance of the Committee's entire membership. It is gratifying to know that I can also count on the most valuable experience, competence and profound knowledge of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Marrack Goulding; to the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Prvoslav Davinic; and to the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Sohrab Kheradi, who has each year so ably cooperated with the Chair and the other officers of the Committee and contributed to the successful completion of the work of the Committee.

At this meeting the First Committee will elect the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur and discuss the organization of the work of the Committee at the current session of the General Assembly.

Election of the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur

The Chairman: I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1935th meeting on 22 September 1971 concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nominations of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that procedure today.

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This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Mr. Ponce (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In my capacity as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly I am pleased and honoured to present the candidacy of Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Minister and Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Austria, to one of the posts of Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Stelzer received a Doctorate in Law from the University of Vienna, a diploma in international relations from the School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna and a Master of Arts degree in Latin studies from Stamford University. He has been a member of the Foreign Service of his country since 1988 and was stationed in Vienna at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and, since 1990 he has been attached to the Permanent Mission of Austria in New York, where he has attended meetings of the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission. He is well known and appreciated by all of us.

Mr. Stelzer's skills have been recognized. In the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) he became Rapporteur of the Coordinating Committee and he is also an expert in the field of verification. In addition to his personal qualities and his sense of responsibility, his professional skills are well known to all delegations and we are certain he will make an essential contribution to the success of our work.

The Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the representative of Ecuador for nominating this candidate. On behalf of the Committee, I wish also to convey to him our sincere thanks for the important contribution he made as Vice-Chairman of the Committee at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

(*spoke in English*)

As there are no other nominations, I shall take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and with established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and declare Mr. Stelzer, of Austria, elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who also served as a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Moradi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The formal congratulations of the delegation of Iran will be extended to you at an appropriate time in the course of the current session.

As I had the honour to be a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during its forty-eighth session, it is now my honour and privilege, on behalf of my delegation, to nominate Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka of Japan for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Although Ambassador Tanaka, current head of the delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, is so well known to this Committee that he needs no introduction, I wish to refer briefly to his long and widely-appreciated diplomatic career. He graduated from the Faculty of Law of Tokyo University in 1956 and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the same year. He held various positions in the Ministry from 1972 to 1991, including the Directorate of the Disarmament Division and the Scientific Affairs Division of the United Nations Bureau, and was Deputy Director-General of the European and Oceanic Affairs Bureau. He also served at the Japanese Embassies at Vienna and Moscow as Counsellor and at Dacca as Ambassador in the same period.

I wish also to note that Mr. Tanaka served as Ambassador and Chief Inspector to South America. In April 1992, he was assigned as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and as head of the delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

My delegation is fully convinced that Ambassador Tanaka's extensive experience in bilateral and multilateral diplomacy will help the Committee to achieve concrete results. I therefore commend to the Committee his nomination as a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: I am certain that I am expressing the sentiments of the Committee when I thank Mr. Moradi for the very valuable contribution that he made last year as Vice-Chairman.

As there are no other nominations, I shall take it that in this instance also the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish now to express my warmest congratulations to the two Vice-Chairmen and assure them of my confidence that we shall jointly discharge the important responsibilities incumbent upon us.

I should like to inform you that consultations are still continuing regarding the candidacy for the post of Rapporteur. Accordingly, we will defer the election of the Rapporteur until a later stage, pending the outcome of those consultations.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: May I draw the attention of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I hope that this rule will be applied and respected today and in the future and I shall be personally grateful to all delegations if they would dispense with that customary passage at the beginning of their statements.

Mr. Hoffmann (Germany): It was an honour and a pleasure for my delegation recently to propose, Sir, on behalf of the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador von Wagner, your candidature to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I should now like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on assuming this important post. As my delegation noted when presenting you for the chairmanship of the First Committee, you have the experience and diplomatic skills needed to guide the work of the First Committee at a time when the United Nations is faced with fundamental challenges to peace and security, various important aspects of which are being considered by this Committee. Accordingly, I wish you, Mr. Chairman, all the very best for the future in discharging your important duties. At the same time, I should like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in efforts to bring our work to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Yoshitomo Tanaka of Japan and Mr. Thomas Stelzer, of Austria, on their election to the posts of Vice-Chairmen of this Committee. Moreover, on behalf of Ambassador von Wagner, I should like to express thanks for the kind words about him and to thank the Chairman and all the members of the Committee for their constructive contributions to the Committee's work, as well as for the cooperation and support they afforded him.

I should also like to take this opportunity to convey Ambassador von Wagner's sincere gratitude for the valuable assistance he received from members of the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Kheradi, and the other officers of the Committee.

At the last meeting of the First Committee at the General Assembly's forty-eighth session, on 9 September 1994, Ambassador von Wagner expressed his wish for the future that the Committee might rationalize its work and reform its agenda to the point where it could focus primarily on topical items directly affecting international peace and security and could thus contribute actively to mastering the enormous challenges facing the world community today.

As a first step towards modernization, Ambassador von Wagner sought to concentrate his efforts as Chairman on the further rationalization of the work of the Committee. In so doing his constant desire was to ensure a broad consensus of the members of the Committee. To this end he conducted a series of consultations, the outcome of which led to the adoption of a resolution 48/87 and subsequently of a decision containing an annex that could form the basis for further deliberations. As this annex is composed solely of contributions by members of the Committee it is Ambassador von Wagner's hope that it might be implemented after further consultations with a view to making the lives of all of us easier, thereby freeing mental energy and time that could be put to productive use in dealing with the host of unresolved topical issues facing us.

Against this background I should like to encourage you, Mr. Chairman, to continue the process of rationalization begun many years ago. It is certainly a continuing process, however incremental, and we should not be discouraged by occasional obstacles or perceived set-backs but rather seek all the more to overcome them using the combined wisdom and experience of yourself, Mr. Chairman, and of the other members of the Committee.

The Chairman: On behalf of the officers of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me and to other officers of the Committee. I very much appreciate the pledge of cooperation extended to me personally and to the entire Committee in the discharging of our responsibilities. I particularly value the assurance of friendship and collaboration, which we shall certainly need in the successful discharge of our responsibilities.

Mr. Stelzer (Austria): I thank my colleague and friend from Ecuador for suggesting me as a Vice-Chairman of the Committee and I thank the members of the First Committee for bestowing on me the great honour, and entrusting me with the responsibility, of serving in this Bureau. I am very well aware that I find myself in this Bureau in the company of very illustrious personalities of international disarmament and I pledge to you, Mr. Chairman, my collaboration and support during the course of the work of the First Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Austria, Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for the kind remarks he addressed to me, and I certainly look forward to a very harmonious working relationship.

Mr. Takahashi (Japan): I should like to express my appreciation to the representative of Iran for the excellent manner in which he discharged his responsibilities as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

On behalf of Ambassador Tanaka and the Japanese delegation I should like to reaffirm that the Government of Japan attaches great importance to the work of the First Committee and is determined to contribute actively to ensuring the success of its endeavours. Ambassador Tanaka is expected to arrive in New York soon and is looking forward to seeing all the members of the Committee. Again I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen, and all members of the First Committee for supporting the candidature of Ambassador Tanaka to the position of Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Japan for his kind words addressed to me and to other officers of the Committee and I wish fully to reciprocate those sentiments. I am certain that I can count on his active assistance and cooperation.

The Committee has elected the two Vice-Chairman but will need to revert to the matter of the election of the Rapporteur at a later stage.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I draw the attention of members to document A/C.1/49/1 containing a letter dated 23 September 1994 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly at the forty-ninth session and informing me that the General Assembly at its third meeting had decided to allocate 22 items to the First Committee for its consideration, namely agenda items 53 to 73 and 153.

Before I proceed to give a fuller account of the Committee's proposed programme of work and timetable for the current session, I should like to provide some preliminary explanations.

As members are aware, according to established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work only after the conclusion of the general debate in plenary meetings of the Assembly. In view of the Assembly's decision, upon the recommendation of the General Committee, that all the Main Committees should make every effort to complete their work by 2 December 1994, members will notice that the proposed time-frame within which the First Committee would need to complete its work would be from Monday, 17 October, to Wednesday, 23 November.

At this stage I would point out that last year the Committee utilized a total of 32 meetings and in spite of the limitations it was able to complete its work on Wednesday, 24 November 1993, that is, one day before the Thanksgiving holiday. Hence, I am sure that if we make concerted and sincere efforts fully to utilize the conference facilities and resources available to us in an effective manner, the Committee will be able to finish its work on time and will accomplish its tasks without undue difficulty.

In order to facilitate the work of the Committee I have conducted a series of extensive informal consultations with a number of individual delegations and representatives of regional groups on the programme of work and timetable of the Committee. I and the officers of the Committee with the assistance of the secretariat, especially the Secretary of the Committee, have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable — document A/C.1/49/3 — which was considered and accepted *ad referendum*, at the informal meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, 5 October. I hope that it will receive the approval of all members so

that the Committee may be enabled to adopt it at this meeting. In preparing the proposed programme of work and timetable, I have taken into account the practice and precedents which have evolved over recent years, as well as ideas and suggestions put forward during the last session of the First Committee in order to enable the Committee to conclude its work and to meet its responsibilities in a smooth and efficient manner.

As indicated in the programme of work, the Committee will consider all the agenda items allocated to it under three main categories: first, those items dealing with disarmament and international security, that is, agenda items 53 to 66 and 68 to 72 and 153; secondly, agenda item 73 relating to "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee"; and thirdly, agenda item 67, "Question of Antarctica".

At this juncture, I should like to indicate that a precise deadline has been set for the submission of all draft resolutions under each of the aforementioned three categories in order to give sufficient time for delegations to conduct the necessary consultations, as well as to seek instructions from their respective Governments before the Committee proceeds to take a decision on the draft resolutions concerned.

The deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament agenda items, namely items 53 to 66, 69, 71, 72 and 153, will be Tuesday, 27 October 1994, at 6 p.m., and the deadline for the submission of all draft resolutions under international security agenda items, namely, items 68 to 70 will be Thursday, 3 November 1994, at 6 p.m. I request cooperation from all delegations concerned in adhering strictly to those deadlines. Next, the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under agenda item 73 ill be Friday, 11 November 1994, at 6 p.m. Finally the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under agenda item 67 will be Monday, 21 November 1994, at 6 p.m.

Delegations are strongly encouraged to submit their draft resolutions as early as possible, especially those draft resolutions that have programme budget implications, in order to meet the mandatory deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions with financial implications.

I should like to propose that the First Committee should begin its substantive work on Monday, 17 October, by holding a short general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items, namely items 53 to 66, 68 to 72, and 153. A total of nine meetings from Monday, 17 October, to Monday, 24 October 1994, will be allocated for this stage of the work of the Committee.

In this connection, I should like to request delegations, if at all possible, kindly to limit the time for delivery of their statements to 10 minutes in order to enable all those delegations wishing to do so to participate in the general debate within the time period allotted.

Moreover, in order to use the time and conference facilities available to the Committee fully and constructively, I invite delegations kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. Furthermore, it should be noted that the date for the closure of the list of speakers on all disarmament and international security agenda items will Monday, 17 October, at 6 p.m.

Before proceeding to the next stage of our work, I should like to inform the Committee that at our first substantive meeting, which will take place on Monday, 17 October, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, will address the First Committee. May I take this opportunity to request delegations kindly to be present in the conference room punctually at 10 a.m. so that the meeting can be convened on time.

From Tuesday, 25 October, to Thursday, 27 October, and from Monday, 31 October, to Tuesday, 1 November, the First Committee will hold structured discussions on specific subjects on the adopted thematic approach on disarmament and international security agenda items. A total of eight meetings will be devoted to this phase of the work of the Committee. In this regard, I should like to say that I and the officers of the Committee, with the assistance and cooperation of the Secretariat, will provide the necessary information to delegations well in advance regarding each subject and the time allocated for its consideration.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the meeting of the First Committee on Friday, 28 October 1994, will be devoted to a special meeting of the Committee in observance of Disarmament Week. I should also like to inform members of the Committee that the Twelfth Pledging Conference for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme will be convened immediately following the special meeting of the First Committee.

With regard to the third phase of our work, a period from Thursday, 3 November, to Wednesday, 9 November, will be devoted to the consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items — items 53 to 66, 68 to 72 and 153. A total of five meetings will be at the disposal of the Committee for that purpose.

Beginning Thursday, 10 November, an exchange of views will be held on agenda item 73, "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee", and a total of two meetings will be allocated for this stage of our work.

The next stage of the work of the Committee will take place from Friday, 11 November, to Friday, 18 November 1994. It will be devoted to taking action on all draft resolutions submitted under disarmament and international security agenda items, including item 73, related to the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee. A total of nine meetings will be available to the Committee for that phase of the work of the Committee.

In this connection, it is my intention to retain during the current session, as was the practice at previous ones, the voting procedure involving the grouping of all resolutions by clusters and I shall, at an appropriate time, present to the Committee specific proposals concerning this matter.

After the conclusion of the consideration of all disarmament and international security items, including item 73 related to the question of the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee — namely items 53 to 66, 68 to 73 and 153 — the Committee will then proceed to agenda item 67, entitled "Question of Antarctica". The Committee will devote the period from Monday, 21 November, to Wednesday, 23 November — a total of four meetings — to a general debate on, consideration of and action upon draft resolutions submitted under that item. The deadline for submission of draft resolutions under agenda item 67 will be Monday, 21 November, at 6 p.m.

Furthermore, I should like once again to emphasize that it is absolutely imperative that the deadline be met for the submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions entailing programme budget implications.

On the basis of the proposed programme of work and timetable now before the Committee, I believe that we should be able to conclude the consideration of all agenda items allocated to us within the available time, by 23 November.

If there are no comments and no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with the suggested programme of work and timetable as contained in document A/C.1/49/3.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should like now to draw the Committee's attention to decision 34/401 of the General Assembly affecting the work of the Main Committees, in particular to its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, right of reply, and budgetary and financial issues, which I would like to apply with the cooperation of all members of the Committee.

In order fully to utilize the time and conference facilities available to the Committee, I intend to open the meetings of the Committee at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and make every effort to adjourn the meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively.

Furthermore, I wish to indicate that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee when a sufficient number of speakers are on the list of speakers so that we can make full use of the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible. I should like to add that resources allocated to a meeting cancelled at an appropriate time may be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee.

At this stage, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to make a statement on certain matters pertaining to the proceedings of the First Committee.

Mr. Kheradi (Secretary of the Committee): I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to draw the attention of delegations to the following points. I should like first of all to invite delegations' attention to the fact that this year once again the General Assembly has decided to depart, during its forty-ninth session, from the rule that a quarter of the members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and debate permitted to proceed. The General Assembly made that recommendation on the understanding that such a waiver did not imply any permanent change in the relevant provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure pertaining to the opening of meetings whereby a majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken. Further, such a waiver would

not affect the provision of the rules of procedure concerning the requirement of the presence of a majority of members for any decision to be taken.

In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable that has just been adopted, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be closed on Monday, 17 October, at 6 p.m. A number of delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate on those items, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. In order to utilize fully the conference facilities available to the Committee, all delegations are requested to inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience, if possible even today.

As you mentioned earlier, Sir, members of the Committee are urged to submit draft resolutions, especially those which have programme budget implications or entail programme budget statements, as far in advance as possible in order to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. A minimum period of 48 hours should be allowed between the submission of, and the voting on, a proposal involving expenditure in order to allow the Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications.

That would certainly facilitate the Secretariat's task of processing the drafts in a timely manner and, if I may venture to say so, would provide enough time to members of the Committee for consultations and for seeking the necessary instructions, as required.

I request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions and amendments and the names of sponsors thereof should be communicated to the Secretariat in writing to ensure accuracy and to avoid any subsequent misunderstandings.

Requests for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should be submitted in writing as early as possible, so that the necessary arrangements can be made in time.

I should like furthermore to draw the attention of members of the Committee to rule 153 of the rules of procedure, which reads as follows:

> "No resolution involving expenditure shall be recommended by a committee for approval by the General Assembly unless it is accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. No resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretary-General shall be voted by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee (Fifth Committee) has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations."

I wish once again to draw the attention of members to General Assembly decision 34/401, particularly its provisions dealing with explanations of vote and rights of reply. At this stage I shall not go into detail regarding this matter, but would refer members to paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of that decision, which pertain to those particular issues.

I should also like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/49/INF/1, which was issued a few days ago. For the purpose of information and ready reference, this document lists all documents before the First Committee that had been issued as of 14 October 1994. This particular document will be updated and revisions will be issued as appropriate.

I would ask delegations kindly to submit the list of members of their delegations to the First Committee secretariat as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the circulation of the Committee's membership list at as early a stage of the session as possible.

In addition to the copies requested for general distribution to the representatives with respect to statements of delegations, delegations are requested to provide to the conference officers a minimum of 30 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes.

Finally, may I emphasize that everything possible will be done to ensure adherence to the timetable adopted. In the final analysis, members will need to be mindful of the fact that the due degree of flexibility will need to be exercised from time to time as necessary. This will of course depend upon the contingencies and circumstances involved, including the availability of the necessary conference facilities.

Before I conclude my remarks, I hope you will permit me to refer to one other matter, and this concerns the question of a letter that was transmitted by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee to the Chairman of the First

Committee as contained in document A/C.1/49/2, entitled "Allocation of items to the First Committee". We have looked into this matter and explored the issue, and I have just received, as a result, a communication from the Secretary of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly that states as follows:

> "With reference to the letter of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee, dated 26 September 1994, as contained in document A/C.1/49/2, regarding the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan 1992-1997, I wish to advise you that none of the programmes being revised is of relevance to the work of the First Committee."

Should there be any further developments concerning this matter, I will of course bring them to the attention of the Committee accordingly.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.